



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Great Government Through the General Management System – Quality, Timeliness, Value
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CLASS SPECIFICATION

CLASSIFIED

HEAD PSYCHIATRIC NURSE

Class No. 004526

■ CLASSIFICATION PURPOSE

Under general direction, to plan, assign and supervise the provision of professional nursing care to mentally ill and emotionally disturbed patients in county mental health facilities and clinics; and to perform related work.

■ DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

The County's mental health services include clinics and facilities, which provide services on an in-patient and out-patient basis and provide diagnosis, treatment, crisis intervention and community education. Positions are located at the Health and Human Services Agency psychiatric hospital or facilities throughout the county. Incumbents work in interdisciplinary treatment teams composed of licensed medical and mental health professionals.

Head Psychiatric Nurse is a first-line supervisory class with responsibility for coordinating 24-hour/7-day a week patient care within an assigned unit. This class differs from the next lower class in this series, Psychiatric Nurse II, in that the latter is the journey level class providing direct nursing care to patients.

■ FUNCTIONS

The examples of functions listed in the class specification are representative but not necessarily exhaustive or descriptive of any one position in the class. Management is not precluded from assigning other related functions not listed herein if such duties are a logical assignment for the position.

Essential Functions:

1. Plans, organizes, schedules and supervises the work of professional and para-professional nursing staff.
2. Evaluates nursing staff in implementation of treatment plans and daily work performance.
3. Consults with psychiatrists, psychologists and other mental health staff in designing appropriate treatment plans for patients.
4. Assists the patients in understanding the nature of emotional disturbances, and helps patients in understanding and accepting the need for treatment.
5. Instructs nursing personnel about procedures to be followed and techniques to be used in the nursing unit.
6. Administers, and notes reaction to, psychotropic drugs and other medications.
7. Performs skilled direct nursing care.
8. Prepares written psychiatric evaluations of a patient's condition and may recommend court ordered hospitalization.
9. May testify in court as to the patient's mental and physical condition.
10. Assists in maintaining a safe and secure environment for staff and patients.
11. Provides courteous, high quality service to members of the public by personally responding to requests for service or making an appropriate referral.

■ KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

- Professional nursing principles, procedures, and techniques used in the care and treatment of psychiatric patients.
- Social, psychological and physical factors of mental and emotional disorders.

- Medical and psychological terminology.
- Medications, including psychotropic drugs, and effects on psychiatric patients.
- Control, presentation and administration of medications.
- State of California laws and regulations for the nursing profession.
- Regulations pertaining to psychiatric nursing and the treatment of the mentally and emotionally disturbed patient.
- Theories, principles and techniques of group and individual psychotherapy.
- Organization and procedures of mental health treatment facilities and the use of multi-disciplinary treatment teams.
- Principles of supervision.
- Symptoms and behavior patterns of emotionally disturbed and mentally ill patients.
- Medical and psychiatric emergency procedures.
- Community resources.
- Telephone office, and online etiquette.
- County customer service objectives and strategies.

Skills and Abilities to:

- Assign, schedule, review and evaluate the work of nursing personnel.
- Anticipate and plan necessary in-service training and education.
- Apply professional nursing care principles and procedures in the evaluation and treatment of psychiatric patients.
- Keep accurate written charts and records of patients' activities and progress.
- Comply with laws, rules, regulations, protocols and procedures, including security requirements, applicable to psychiatric facilities.
- Use professional judgment to ascertain the patients' issues, and apply intervention techniques to patients in crisis.
- Conduct and assist in formal and informal, individual and group counseling.
- Work cooperatively with medical and mental health professionals in a multi-disciplinary treatment setting.
- Develop interpersonal therapeutic relationships with psychiatric patients.
- Communicate effectively with a variety of individuals representing diverse cultures and backgrounds and function calmly in stressful situations, which require a high degree of sensitivity, tact and diplomacy.
- Treat County employees, representatives of outside agencies and members of the public with courtesy and respect.
- Provide prompt, efficient and responsive service.
- Exercise appropriate judgment in answering questions and releasing information; analyze and project consequences of decisions and/or recommendations.

■ EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Education, training, and/or experience that demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities listed above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are:

1. Three (3) years of experience as a registered nurse (RN), one (1) year of which must have been in a specialized psychiatric setting, OR
2. A bachelor's of science degree from an accredited college or university or certified equivalency for foreign studies in nursing and two (2) years of experience as a registered nurse (RN), one (1) year of which must have been in a specialized psychiatric setting, OR
3. A master's of science degree from an accredited college or university or certified equivalency for foreign studies in nursing and one (1) year of experience as a registered nurse (RN) in a specialized psychiatric setting.

■ ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The physical characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the classification. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with qualified disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job, on a case-by-case basis.

Frequent: walking, standing, neck and waist bending, climbing, repetitive use of hands, power hand grasping, and reaching above and below shoulder level. Occasional: sitting, squatting, kneeling, neck and waist twisting, and hand pushing and pulling. Operating assigned equipment and machinery. Must be able to lift up to 11 lbs., and occasionally 50 lbs.

■ SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS

License

Valid California class C driver's license, which must be maintained throughout employment in this class, is required at time of appointment, or the ability to arrange necessary and timely transportation for field travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their own vehicle.

Valid Registered Nurse license issued by the State of California. Failure to maintain such license will be cause for dismissal.

Certification/Registration

Valid CPR card is required at time of appointment.

Working Conditions

May be subjected to contagious disease and verbal and physical abuse from patients.

Background Investigation

Must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. Prior to appointment, candidates will be subject to a background investigation.

Probationary Period

Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in this class shall serve a probationary period of 6 months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).

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